

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 were pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 30 has been canceled. New claim 31 has been added. Therefore, claims 1-31 are now pending and reconsideration of the application is requested for at least the reasons that follow.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indication that claims 16-23 are allowed is appreciated. Further, claims 3, 4 and 8-12 are objected to according to the Office Action Summary, but no description of the objections is included in the Detailed Action. Therefore, claims 3, 4 and 8-12 are considered to contain allowable subject matter.

Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5-7, 13-15 and 24-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,634,671 (“Heigl”). The rejections should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons.

The rejection of amended claim 1 should be withdrawn at least because Heigl does not disclose, teach or suggest the claimed subject matter. For example, Heigl does not disclose, teach or suggest that “the strap is tensioned between a first point located toward a front portion of the protection element and a second point located toward a rear portion of the protection element, the first point being a fastening point and the second point being a deflection element,” as called for in claim 1. The Office Action contends that Heigl discloses “the tensioning strap [extending] from a first fastening point via at least one deflecting device 26 to a second fastening point.” Office Action at p. 3, lines 15-16. The tensioning device 24 of Heigl only extends between a front portion (near separate device 26) of the gas bag 12 to a rear portion (near tightening device 28) of the gas bag 12. However, the tensioning device of Heigl is not tensioned between a first point and a second point that is a “deflection element.” The Office Action states that element 26 is a deflecting device. Element 26, however, is merely a separate device “which brings about a reduction of the anchoring force acting on the tensioning band,” and is not a “deflection element.” Further, element 26 is positioned at a front portion of the gas bag 12, not a rear portion. In addition, element 28 is merely a

tightening device, not a “deflection element.” Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 5-7, 14-15 and 24-29 depend from claim 1 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable subject matter set forth in these dependent claims.

The rejection of claim 13 should be withdrawn for at least the following reasons. Heigl does not disclose, teach or suggest “a return lock which prevents the tensioned strap from being released or relaxed,” as called for in claim 13. The Office Action contends that “Heigl teaches a return lock.” Office Action at p. 3, line 17. However, Heigl discloses a device 26 that permits the tensioning device to release after tensioning. The device 26 of Heigl does not prevent “the tensioned strap from being released or relaxed.” See Heigl at Figs. 2(a), 2(b) and col. 3, lines 60-63. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Favorable reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 12/22/05

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